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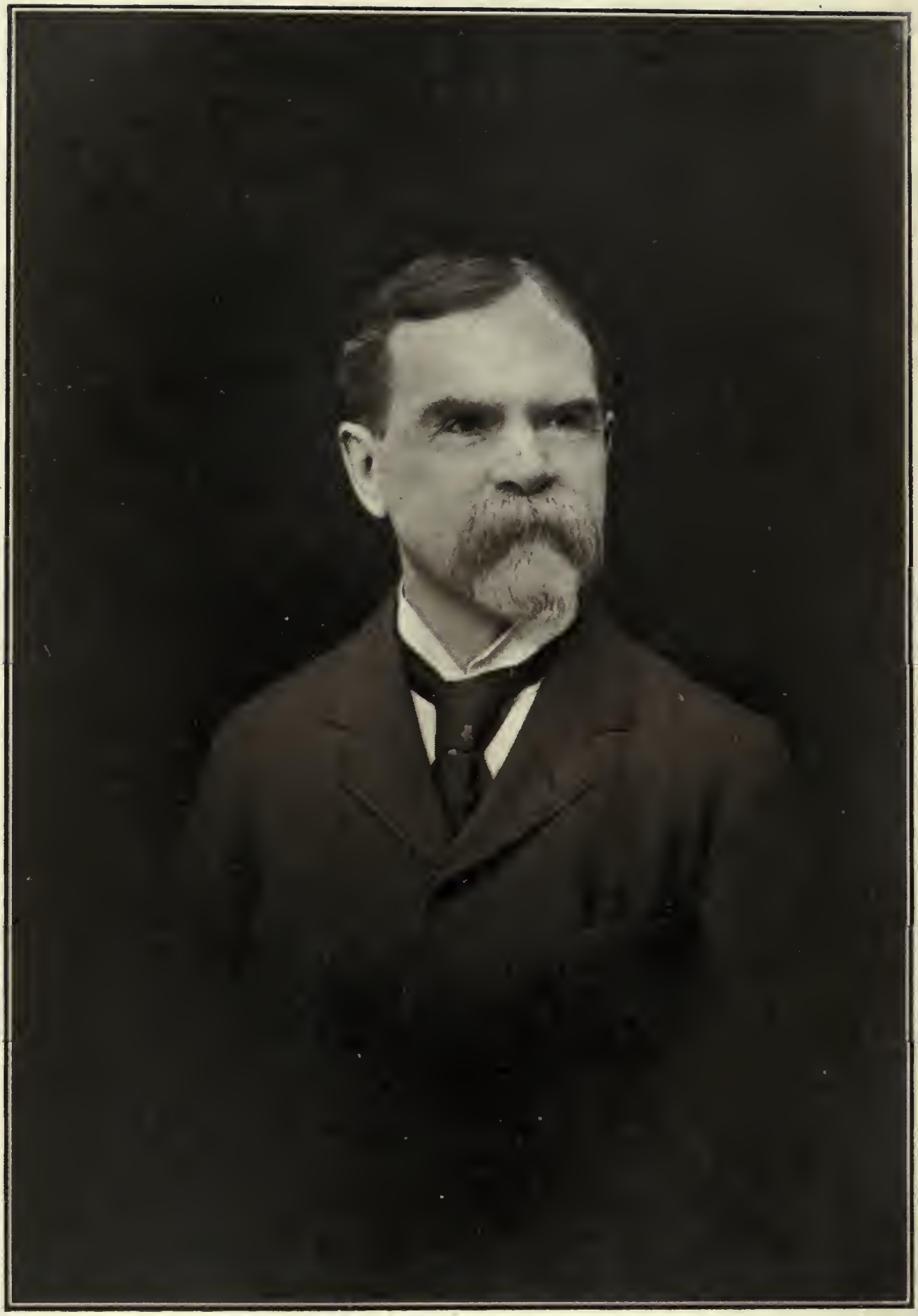

Geo C Wilson

POEMS

OF

GEORGE CRAWFORD WILSON

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

George Crawford Wilson was born in Indiana, January 7, 1837, and died in Monrovia, California, April 26, 1902.

At the age of fifteen he entered Asbury University, which is now known as De Pauw University, in Greencastle, Indiana. Five years later he completed his college course and was graduated from the University of Indiana at Bloomington when but a few months past his twentieth year. He then began the study of law, and in a comparatively short time was admitted to the bar. When in 1861 the Civil War broke out and threatened the disunion of the States, George Wilson was among the first to answer his Country's call and enlist in defense of the Union. Although he had enlisted as a private, he was soon given a commission, serving on the staff of General Buford, and was at the front in two of the great battles of the war, at Fort Donaldson and on the hard-fought field of Shiloh.

After the close of the war he still gave his energies to the service of his country, and entered political life, his grateful fellow-citizens electing him to the legislature of Illinois. After serving with distinction his

term in legislative halls, he gave up political life to engage in business and became a successful banker in Illinois.

During the whole of this strenuous and exciting portion of his life he found time to cultivate his special fondness for literature; and on removing to Chicago, he retired from active business and devoted some time to literary pursuits, for which he had a natural inclination and special qualifications.

In 1897 he became a resident of California, where he enjoyed the confidence of the entire community; indeed, to know him was to love him; he was a splendid type of American gentleman; a brave soldier, modest and unassuming in his public career, a thorough business man, yet of a deeply religious nature and possessed of many sympathetic and affectionate characteristics. He never married, but with unswerving fidelity and tenderest care gave the last ten years of his life to close companionship with his dear mother, who passed away just a short month before him, at the age of ninety-one years. In his daily reading of the Bible to her, they together had prepared for the Better Land.

He died very suddenly in Monrovia while standing talking to a friend. His death was a severe shock to his remaining relatives and occasioned much sadness to his many friends. The funeral services in Monrovia, April 28, 1902, were of a peculiarly affecting character; two poems written by Mr. Wilson, "The Final Gospel" and "The Magdalen's Thanksgiving," were read by the officiating clergyman, and in the purity of thought and exaltation of life in the lines there was revealed to the sorrowing listeners a view of the manly, unselfish spirit of George Crawford Wilson.

A PERSONAL LETTER TO THE FAMILY FROM AN OLD FRIEND.

"A close association for over forty years with George Crawford Wilson revealed the man; and the revelation disclosed a character eminent for intelligence, kindness and reliability. He was greatly good, evincing the broadest charity for his fellow-men, greeting all men respectfully, and possessing the respect of all. He made no criticisms and received none. His life was one of love, and he was universally beloved. He ever walked in peaceful paths, but in what was right he acted without fear and without reproach. His mental vision was clear, his judgment sound, and his counsels invaluable. He was a gentleman by nature, standing on a higher plane than any ever reached by veneering studies in etiquette. His kindly and thoughtful disposition gave surer guidance in this regard. He lived much and taught us much in his allotted span, and he has left us the most valuable of bequests—a shining example of right living. J. D. LONG."

A friend, knowing of Mr. Wilson's devotion to his mother, sent him these lines, and they were found among the manuscripts of these poems:

HIS MOTHER 'S HIS SWEETHEART.

By Frank Stanton.

His mother 's his sweetheart — the sweetest, the best!"
So say the white roses he brings to my breast;
The roses that bloom when life's summers depart;
But his love is the sweetest rose over my heart.
The love that hath crowned me—
A necklace around me,
That closer to God and to Heaven hath bound me!

"His mother 's his sweetheart." Through all the sad years
His love is the rainbow that shines through my tears;
My light in God's darkness, when with my dim eyes
I see not the stars in the storm of His skies.
When I bow 'neath the rod
And no rose decks the sod,
His love lights the pathway that leads me to God!

"His mother 's his sweetheart." Shine bright for his feet,
O lamps on life's highway! and roses, lean sweet
To the lips of my darling! and God grant His sun
And His stars to my dutiful, beautiful one!
    For his love—it hath crowned me—
    A necklace around me,
And closer to God and to Heaven hath bound me!

AT THE AGE OF FIFTEEN

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The inky web wherein is caught
The viewless fly of human thought.

IN WAR-TIME.

AT BORDERTOWN IN '61.

A Fragment.

A drum-call roused the village street,
And instantly a hundred feet
Went hastening tow'rd that martial sound,
With manly stride and youthful bound;
For beardless lads and bearded men
Alike were filled with ardor then.
A ready hand, a flag unfurled—
The dearest flag in all the world—
Then burst from lips that had been dumb
With waiting, tense and wearisome,
A cheer that shook the vibrant air
As if a thousand men were there.
Ere long there came a hundred more,
And some who had been youths of yore,
Whose whit'ning hair and dimming eyes
Showed youth and strength were memories:
E'en maids and mothers ventured near,
Unbonneted and pale with fear,
For they had heard the rumor dire
That chilled like ice, yet burned like fire.
O! ye who can no longer hide

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Those marks which age has dignified—
How well ye know and can recall
That day they fired on Sumter's wall!
That day the message northward flashed
To tell the waiting lines had clashed;
The Nation's banner had been spurned—
Then parley ceased and powder burned—
And Peace, affrighted, fled afar
Before the awful frown of War!

A stalwart form stood quickly forth—
A citizen of noble worth—
Who, wishing silence, waved his hand
As one entitled to command.
"My friends"—he said—and then his tongue
A moment to his palate clung,
Unpracticed in the facile ways
Of those that turn the fluent phrase—
"In futile speech 'twere wrong to waste
"The time we owe to helpful haste;
"This hour is eloquent—you know
"Your country's peril—who will go?"
Ah! who could know the swell of soul
They felt who signed that glory-roll,

Save one whose name was written there
His dividend of death to share?
So thought young Merwin, while his blood
Rushed hotly like a loosened flood
And drove like lightning through his brain
A panorama—swift and plain.
A picture he could now recall,
Which hung upon the household wall,
Of battle fought for Freedom's cause
That won th' admiring world's applause.
'Twas there his father's grandsire bled
And on his name a lustre shed
That shone through all the distant haze
Of Revolutionary days.
To him that scene from history
Foretold what was again to be.
He saw the cannon flashing red
Beneath the smoke that rose o'erhead;
He saw the wounded upward drag
Themselves once more to cheer the flag—
While, lying close, the bleeding corse
Was trampled by the flying horse.
Prophetic fancy now unrolled
A wider picture than the old,

And through the glass of magic power
She holds to Youth at such an hour,
He saw himself, with streaming hair
And fire-lit eye and bosom bare,
All dauntless face a hostile horde—
Strike down its leader with his sword,
And vanquish him in single fight,
By dint of such God-given sleight
As David's, when his wondrous throw
For Israel laid Goliath low.
Then quivering with a double thrill—
A flush of heat—a sense of chill—
He saw himself again appear
With bearded lip and brow severe,
A fine-clad hero of renown
Returning to his native town!
So fleets the action of a dream
When moments as long years may seem.
To see his duty and decide,
No time so short it could divide;
He sprang, all fervid, and enrolled
His name in letters clear and gold,
High on the bright, heroic page,
With those of neighbors twice his age;

For he was in his callow span—
No more a lad nor quite a man.
At other times 'twere meet for jest
To note the bulging of his chest,
His pose erect and rigid spine,
The downward curving of the line
That marked the crescent of his mouth
And boded ill for all the South!
Elated and a trifle vain,
He turned to read his name again,
With pride unhid and pleasure keen—
The round-writ name of Merwin Deane.

Thus while he flamed with open glow,
He had not guessed, nor could he know,
The tithe of what fair Blanche concealed,
And trembled lest she had revealed—
Who watched with wav'ring, anxious face,
From distance meet for maiden's place.
She, too, that bold appeal had heard,
With all her loyal spirit stirred.
The scene his vision had foretold
She multiplied an hundred-fold,
And shuddered at the curdling sight,

As well a timid maiden might;
But when he leaped with purpose high
To bravely dare—perchance to die—
Her throbbing temples flushed and paled,
And self-control had well-nigh failed;
A current swelled through every vein
Surcharged with rapture and with pain;
She noted with a tell-tale start
The noisy tumult of her heart,
Whose beating sounded like a voice
That named the lover of her choice;
Then shaming lest her cheek confessed
The burning secret of her breast,
She fled and sought in safe retreat
Her close-embowered garden-seat,
Resolved, in silence and alone
To hide the secret all her own.
For ne'er had Merwin spoke the word
His glance had told but tongue deferred,
And maids must e'er their hearts deny
Till men beseech them, though they die.
Unconscious and uncaring, now,
What tales were told by cheek and brow,
Since others' eyes no longer viewed,

She paused in pensive attitude;
Her hair, unloosed ere she had stopped,
In tangle on her shoulders dropped;
A melancholy veiled her face
As 'twere of shadows wove in lace,
And for an instant halting there
She looked the statue of Despair.
But maidens' moods are wondrous brief—
They change while falls the loosened leaf;
One breath was burdened with a sigh,
The next was ready to defy;
Her tardy lover she abused,
Then all his tardiness excused;
The right of usage now upheld,
Now 'gainst its tyranny rebelled;
At length with queries such as these
She softly plied the passing breeze:
"Oh! is it Nature's cruel plan
"That gives the choosing all to man?
"Should custom cramp the candid heart
"And make it but a thing of art?
"The modest flower its bounty free
"May offer to the favored bee;
"The lowly vine, when it has found

"A way to climb up from the ground,
"Puts forth its tendrils and takes hold—
"And Mother Nature does not scold;
"Yon robin, from the topmost bough,
"Is calling for a partner now
"With every sweet, impassioned note
"That shakes her ruddy little throat;
"While I must cower here alone
"And shun to make my fondness known—
"Less free than flower, or vine, or bird,
"Must wait to hear the spoken word!
"Oh! is it right my Love should go
"And never of my love should know?"
A rustle checked the rising tear—
A rapid footfall sounded near,
And Merwin bounded to her side
Aglow with passion and with pride—
The martial and the am'rous flame
Enkindling all his youthful frame.
"My love!"—he cried—no more of speech
Was needed then, from each to each;
Unto his eager arms and brave
In swift embrace herself she gave—
Their lips met in that bliss which rolls

Its welcome flood o'er love-drowned souls,
And mute with that ecstatic sense
They heard life's deepest eloquence.—
Full well we know this humble line
Doth ill befit a theme divine
Which spurns low heights and, mounting, flies
To find expression in the skies.
But who could now such story tell
In better way, or half so well
As tongue and pen have told before
In strain seraphic, o'er and o'er?
Who, in its purpose, fails to trace
The germ eternal of his race?

The task were needless to portray
These lovers of a long-past day:
'Tis naught to say the blissful pair
Were tall and lithe, or dark, or fair,
Or that in feature and in form
They were like statues living, warm:
They had not rank nor riches great,
Yet were they rich in that estate
Which aged kings, for chance to buy,
Would barter all their royalty—

A queen of beauty, having lost,
Would purchase back at any cost—
The miser, having cheaply sold,
To now regain would give his gold—
The poet willingly bequeath
To Lethe's wave his laurel wreath—
The statesman, hero, or the sage
Rub out his name on Fame's bright page;
Since they were in that fair Spring-time
When life is beautiful—sublime—
When it is ecstasy to live,
And Love is all superlative—
The sweetest season ever sung
By voice or verse—for they were young.

* * * * * *
* * * * * *
* * * * * *

You would have searched throughout the land,
Nor found a more devoted band
Than that which rose at Bordertown
To put Disunion's menace down.
When first their thin but eager line—
Absurdly long and serpentine—
Marched proudly down th' admiring street,

With ready but unrhythmic feet,
The very ground could almost feel
The tremor of their untrained zeal;
The very air that fed their breath
Seemed burdened with contempt of death;
As if they had been bred to arms,
To marches, camps, and rude alarms,
To fierce foray and gory fight,
That sicken the unseasoned sight.
But these were children of a time
When war seemed needless as a crime,
And peace had nurtured softer ways,
Like those of bland Arcadian days.
What magic is it that transmutes
Mild reason's force to that of brutes?
Why should her throne be overset
By logic of the bayonet?
Are we not Christians? Much we pray
For Heaven's benign, pacific sway,
And petty striving we abhor—
But rush into the hell of war!
Deep-rooted in the human breast
One love encircles all the rest:
'Tis love of country—which abides

Through every change, whate'er betides,
And makes the land that gave us birth
The best-loved portion of the earth.
The exile—cursed by cruel fate,
Through some harsh policy of state—
Unsolaced for his birth-land longs,
His native scenes and native songs;
The wan and wretched fugitive—
In banishment constrained to live,
Lest on his head his guilt may draw
The vengeance of a broken law—
Through dismal years of shame and grief
Still hugs one prospect of relief:
To reach once more the land he craves,
And lie at last amid its graves;
The idler—led by pleasure's wiles
To far-off seas and shores and isles—
The student—leaving ease behind
To garner treasures of the mind,
His life-long purpose deep to probe
The widest wisdom of the globe—
May tarry 'neath an alien sky
Untroubled by one homeward sigh,
Until that moment when he sees

His country's banner in the breeze—
Then thrills again that kind of joy
That swelled his bosom when a boy,
And though it slept a score of years,
'Twould wake and wet his cheek with tears.
The modest million—loving home,
Nor driv'n in distant lands to roam
Through state's decree, nor felon's dread,
By leisure lured, nor learning led—
Still cherish, mid their tasks of toil,
A passion for their native soil,
Which, grafted in their being, grows
From life's beginning to its close.
'Tis woven with their family ties,
The sports of childhood and its cries;
It mingles in their later days
With all their lives in myriad ways—
'Tis on the landscape—in the air—
In work—in worship—everywhere.
And these are patriots—aye, for these
Demand no honors nor degrees,
But, like their fathers in the past,
They'll serve their country to the last;
When duty calls to danger's post,

These are her safe-guard—these her boast;
From mill and workshop, forge and field—
A phalanx quick to warfare steeled—
They come unhalting to debate
Their dole of fortune or of fate;
To live and wear an honored name,
Partaking of the nation's fame—
Or lie beneath some sculptured stone—
Or, mayhap, fill a grave unknown.

An artist hand should paint the scene—
So proud—so glad—so sad between—
When these crude warriors bade adieu
And marched away to rendezvous.
Those lovers of the common-weal—
The country-folk—on hoof and wheel
At early hour came gathering in,
With clatter and rumble and hurry and din,—
For, in the conflict now begun,
The town and country were as one,
And rustic fervor equaled quite
The valor of the village knight.
Ere long all round the public square,
From cart and wagon, here and there,

The drowsy plough-horse munched his feed,
Untaught to play the warlike steed
Or drag the cannon at his heels
Or stand with its unlimbered wheels,
Unscared the while it belched and roared
And bolts of murderous thunder poured.
The faithful farm-dog lay beneath,
Alert to growl and show his teeth,
Or oft, with anger bristling large,
Arose and circled round his charge
With tail erect and stiffened leg
And step so light 'twould spare an egg.
All noise of daily toil was still
Except the droning of the mill,
Whose busy wheel had never missed
To promptly grind the waiting grist.
The keepers of the village stores
Had closed their blinds and locked their doors—
They could not think of sordid gains
With blood a-tingling in their veins.
To-day no anvil stroke was heard—
A sound familiar as a word
To every ear the village round,
And e'en beyond its farthest bound.

The vacant shop told all the tale;
An apron hung upon a nail—
There was no fire to gleam and glow,
No hand to make the bellows blow;
The brawny tenant—loyal soul!—
But yesterday had "signed the roll."
Up on a flag-pole staunch and high
In billowy curves against the sky—
Resplendent in the lucent air—
A starry banner floated fair;
And where its wavering shadow fell
Beside the old-time public well,
The fife and drum with clangor loud
Had gathered all the feverish crowd.
No bosom then but felt the stir;
Yet, many an eye looked through a blur
Upon a show to others gay
As any common holiday.
The deeper touches of the heart
Were in those circles drawn apart,
Like eddies—when they ofttimes seem
Divided from the flowing stream.
Just here, in wildering shyness, stood
A group from rural neighborhood—

A son, strong-limbed, coarse-clad, and tanned,
With labor's hardness of the hand
And manner lacking townly grace,
But wearing truth upon his face—
Where honesty was writ so plain,
That if you'd split his heart in twain
And lay it open like a book—
You'd read the same as in his look;
His patriot father, proud to spare
His manly and ambitious heir
To serve the flag, as well became
A scion of his loyal name;
The mother, having equal pride,
And that unfathomed love beside
Vouchsafed unto the honored wife
Who brings into the world a life:
Behold her now while there she stands
With furrowed brow and folded hands
And smile so full of sacrifice
'Twould melt the lock of Paradise.
But she is a patriot mother, true,
And, as historic mothers do,
She tries to deem it only joy
To thus devote her stalwart boy;

The trial all her duty strains,
But what she cannot feel she feigns,
And falsely says that she is glad—
The lie's too sacred to be bad!
Outside the crowd that clamored by,
One well-known figure filled the eye—
The blacksmith— big, robust, and red,
With locks crisp-curling round his head—
With Vulcan's visage and his arm,
And bust that would old Phidias charm;
Up to his gaze his fragile spouse
Reluctant raised her timid brows,
Where plaintive shadows now displayed
The ravage that a day had made.
With all the pathos of the poor,
To please his eye that day she wore
His favorite and *her* choicest gown,
Of awkward cut and faded brown;
But yet, though poor, one gem she had
Might make a royal princess glad—
One priceless jewel on her breast—
The darling infant that she pressed:
She joyed to feel its hearty tug
The while it fed beneath her hug.

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The sinewed Samson dared not speak,
Lest tears betray his courage weak;
This moment he could only yearn
For that sweet day when he'd return.
Alas! ere half a year was gone
The roll-call missed the man of brawn—
The wife put on the widow's veil—
The babe knew not its loss to wail.—
While other hearts their feeling proved,
Why seemed young Merwin so unmoved?
Why lingered Blanche so far aloof,
And, if she sorrowed, gave no proof?
The secret they could hide so well
The mute, eaves-dropping stars might tell.
Last evening, ere the shadows dim
Had robbed the gold from daylight's rim,
He hasted through the silent street
Unto that hallowed garden-seat
Where bided now his bosom's mate,
Reproachful that he came so late.
At first her chiding made him vain;
It wounded with a welcome pain,
Until he sweetly stopped her speech
In that old way no art doth teach

But lovers know so well to use
And red-lipped maids can scarce refuse.
Too soon again her murmurs rose
O'er silly fears and fancied woes;
She listened to his fondling phrase,
But answered with o'er-painted praise;
Her fear of rivals took alarm;
She was so plain, so poor of charm,
And he so god-like, ah! she knew
He never, never could be true!
Each needless pang, each new distress,
He softened with a new caress,—
Till harshly on his hearing smote
The jarring of a jealous note!
Disdainful silence woke her ire;
Denial only added fire;
Anon, with pique and spirit stung,
They loosed the lightning of the tongue
And quarreled, with a passion fine,
Despite that other called divine.
Bewildered youth! how could he know
That which has puzzled sages so?—
That she who can so fondly love
With equal fondness can reprove.

For it is true—the wise ones say—
That it was always woman's way
By turns to gratify and grieve,
Since Adam heard the voice of Eve.
Alas! that love's keen dart should be
So keenly barbed with jealousy!
And yet—although it oft may sting—
Without the barb it would not cling.
Forgiving is the sweetest balm
That ever heals 'twixt palm and palm;
And oh! what balm celestial drips
From the forgiving lover's lips!
Down from the cloud of their distress
A deluge dropt of tenderness;
Quick rose again upon her sight
The carnage of the coming fight;
Upon some red and war-drenched plain
She pictured Merwin mangled, slain!
And piteously she begged him now
That he'd revoke his soldier's vow
And free her from the torturing dread
Of living on if he were dead.
He sternly loosed his fond embrace,
And in his valor-lighted face—

Despite that she had pleaded so—
She gladly read his manly "No!"
For beauty from the coward flies,
And love decays when honor dies.

No more she faltered—calm, serene,
She played the parting like a queen—
"Farewell, my hero! go—be brave!
"To-morrow, from the hill-top, wave
"Your final signal back to me—
"I shall not weep, but I shall see."
And so, to-day—their farewell said—
No childish tears they weakly shed,
But, like young Spartans, hid the ache
That pulled their heart-strings nigh to break.

What new-born Muse, in fitting rhyme,
Will sing the urchin of that time?
Who nightly battled in his sleep
And saw his countless victims weep;
Who daily with his sword of wood
O'ercame a fancied multitude;
An hundred times made mimic war,
An hundred times was conqueror!

No mystic ray need search him through
To find his loyalty true-blue;
His screaming treble made it known
As if 'twere by a bugle blown.
His wiser seniors all confessed
Their boyhood's age the blessedest—
Yet by such blessing he was curst,
'Twas fate the wretchedest and worst!
Bewitched by glamour of the strife
He would have pawned the future life,
With all its promises of bliss,
To be a soldier now in this. —
What though a lad of larger growth
With perjured conscience took the oath
And fought where veterans might have feared,
Ere yet his cheek had grown a beard?
God measures by no iron gauge;
Upon the great accusing page
Some holy sins, we're fain to think,
Are not writ down in fadeless ink. —

Adown the ranks came one whose name
Had felt the touch of martial fame—
In that far day a rare renown,

That shed its lustre on the town,
Whose very place was known, perhaps,
More by his name than by the maps.
A man he was of sturdy mould,
Of that good age—nor young, nor old—
When well-knit strength and wisdom join—
The manful prime of brain and loin.
Schoolboys had read and oft declaimed,
How, midst the dying and the maimed,
He'd bravely faced his country's foe
One bloody day in Mexico.
'Twas said—on Buena Vista's field
When one who bore the colors reeled
And fell, this hero sprang and gripped
The staff as from his hand it slipped,
And saved it from dishonoring dust;
A lance had given his thigh a thrust;
A sabre-blow had split his cheek;
From plenteous bleeding he was weak,
Yet, like a lion newly hurt
And so enraged, with sudden spurt
He fiercely seized the hostile blade
Whose edge the angry gash had made,
And tearing it from the foeman's hand

He flashed aloft the captive brand;
A second lance was at his throat—
The threat'ning shaft he deftly smote
And turned its gleaming point aside,
Then waved his colors high and wide;
His fainting comrades rallied then
And fighting madly—one to ten—
They held the red and slippery ground
Which, ever since, was glory-crowned!
Ah! surely this good blade must be
A talisman of victory,
If its brave captor will but lead;
And even so it is decreed
This is the Captain—one whom Fate
Reserves and destines to be great;
His shoulder bears no strap or bar—
He wears that sabre and a scar.
Where'er he halts, or walks along,
He wins the homage of the throng;
The waiting ranks impatient stand
To catch the throb of his command;
At length 'tis sounded—"Forward! March!"—
As if it fell from Heaven's arch;
With worthier impulse forth they start

Than ever fired crusader's heart;
And mark how well, though little wont,
To-day they keep their eyes a-front,
Unswerved by all the loud huzzas
That fill their ears with fond applause;
Bright kerchiefs wave and hats are swung
With every burst of lip and lung—
They march right on with rigid pride,
That will not cast one glance aside.
They pass the mill whose well-known pile
From every window seems to smile;
They file below the rocky ledge,
Where halts the crowd upon the edge;
They cross the brook, beside whose bank
They oft have waded and have drank;
They take the winding road beyond,
Mid scenes to recollection fond—
The field, the orchard, and the woods,
The meadow—sweet in all its moods—
Where oft in summer morning blithe
They've heard the whetting of the scythe;
Where flits and sings the meadow-lark,
A glint of yellow like a spark
And song that stirs the human deeps

Where Memory dwells and Pathos sleeps.
Anon on fitful breezes come
The echoes of the fife and drum;
Where'er in sight the roadway bends,
The watching throng a greeting sends;
But all save breathing, now, is still,
For—see! they're climbing Byron's Hill,
Whose wooded top and farther side
From further view will soon divide;
They round the verge—they reach the crest—
And with emotion in each breast
They face about and give a cheer
That flies across the atmosphere;
They wheel again—they're marching on—
A moment more and they are gone!
The latest signal that was seen,
Was waved by gallant Merwin Deane;
The eye that saw it latest there
Was that of loving Blanche Adair.

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No blither morning ever broke
Than that when Merwin first awoke
To hear the camp's loud reveille,

As dawn spread over tent and tree.
His wont had been at that rare hour
When sleep still wields a waning pow'r,
To linger, lock'd in slumb'rous ease,
And drift away on dream-land seas
Through Fantasy's illusive realm
In bark bereft of keel and helm—
Or else, half-waked, with drowsy ear
To note the crow of chanticleer—
The pigeon's coo—the bob-white's call—
The horses neighing in their stall—
The lowing of the hungry kine—
His faithful spaniel's coaxing whine,
Which waited for him at the door
To lick his hand and run before.
But scorning weak indulgence now
He brushed the dullness from his brow
And bounded forth with agile haste—
Wide-eyed, alert, and eager-faced—
As radiant in this school of war
As children in their primers are.
He heard the sergeant's warning shout—
"Turn out for roll-call, men, turn out!"
Right promptly into line he came,

And when the sergeant called his name,
He made his answer deep and hoarse,
To give his voice a manlier force.
Thus ere the rising of the sun
His new career was well begun.
It were a task for tardy prose,
Which in more leisure current flows,
But much too tedious and too long
For hast'ning rhyme and hurried song—
Nor would it aught of worth avail
To loiter over each detail
Of duty and of discipline
He took his daily lessons in;
To load, to aim, to fire, to charge
With eye ablaze and nostril large,
And all of battle's alphabet,
Which spelleth blood when foes are met.
This stripling reared mid peaceful fields,
Where savageness to softness yields—
Who oft had rambled through the dells
And heard the distant village bells,
But rarely ranged beyond the hills
Whose ridge barred out the world's great ills
And circled with its far outline

The spot which was to him divine:
Who ne'er had felt severer pain
Than ache of tooth or ankle-sprain,
Nor ever looked on carnage red
Save in the village butcher's shed—
In garb and bearing now transformed,
With war's mere foretaste heaved and warmed.—
So men in every clime and age
Have swelled and flamed with martial rage:
The haughtiest and holiest,
The lordliest and lowliest,
Have worshiped the heroic heart
And flock to pay their homage still
Unto the great enduring art
Of how to conquer or to kill.
If wars must come, as once foretold
By HIM who came to earth of old,
All heralded the Prince of Peace,
To win from woe a world's release—
Then honor and all sweet applause
To him who fights for worthy cause;
But some have worn the plumes of war
Scarce heeding what they battled for.—
One thing he learned without delay,

The chiefest duty: to obey.
It is but loyal to the truth
To say he was no spineless youth
Who brooked abuse or studied slight
When honor whispered him to fight;
Yet he was of that gentle mould
That dares in danger to be bold
But shrinks from word or look austere
From finer sense than that of fear.—
By reason of unknown delays
That hindered in those troublous days,
Long time he had no uniform
To nurse his pride and keep it warm;
No warlike weapon graced his hand
To flourish with defiance grand.
No soul is fired to fight and bleed
In sober and unmartial tweed
As when in panoply arrayed,
To dazzle and to make afraid.
And, oh! what keen delight he knew
The day he donned the brass and blue!
How like a fierce destroyer he felt
With musket, cartridge-box, and belt,
And thought what privilege 't would be

If those at home could only see!
With bent for training aptly turned
By patient drill, ere long he learned
To face, to march, to wheel, to stand,
Obedient to the sharp command—
To hear unvexed the brusque reproof
And recognize its plain behoof.
His tender flesh could well avouch
The hardness of his soldier-couch;
But youth and usage put to shame
The mind to murmur or to blame.
Though oft those dainties he deplored
That heaped at home the bounteous board,
His sharpened palate relished soon
The coarsest fare of pot and spoon.
The days of storm and nights unstarred
As sentinel he stood on guard
And held his post with such a sense
Of worth and mighty consequence
That neither bribe of tempting gold,
Nor fearsome threat, nor flattery bold,
Nor comrade's plea, nor smile of lass
Could wring from him the right to pass.

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At midnight on the picket line
The reigning stillness gave no sign
That aught of danger hovered near
That e'en a timorous heart might fear.
At break of day a shot was fired,
And ere the echo had expired,
A clear and ringing shot replied
Which soon was tenfold multiplied;
As from a drop the shower grows
The brisk and rattling skirmish rose.
Not long the pickets bore the brunt
Of pressure on their scattered front,
But stubborn still they still gave way
Before the impetuous line of gray,
Nor halted till they held in view
The swiftly forming ranks of blue.
A yell broke on the sulph'rous air,
Enough to raise each bristling hair;
Then broke the battle's pent-up wrath,
As tempests break upon their path,
And that which was but din before
Was now a wide-spread deafening roar;
While hoarse with slaughter's awful thirst
The cannon gave its opening burst.
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THE SOUTHERN TROOPER.

Far down in the Southland, where flowers were blooming
And breathing their sweets on the soft April air,
An old negro bondman a war-steed was grooming,
To bear his young master—bold Allen Sinclair.
The slave had been born to his bondage—a chattel,
A thing to be trafficked and holden like cattle;
His light-hearted master was fated to battle
As Slavery's defender, though Liberty's heir.

The century's laws to the white man had granted
A license that rested on barbarous might;
He took from the black what his labor had planted,
And deemed that law's sanction had made it his right.
He scouted all threat of a reckoning season;
Environed like him, could *we* challenge his reason?
With a patriot's fire, though guilty of treason,
He rode forth—a cavalier—burning to fight.

The Southron was valiant but haughty, and scorning
The name of the foe he was destined to meet,
He galloped away in the fine April morning
Full sure of his prowess and firm in his seat.
In spirit superb and by ancestry flattered,
He fell into dreaming as onward he clattered—
He saw the invaders all vanquished and scattered—
He dreamed but of triumph—not once of defeat.

A moment he halted where dwelt a rare beauty—
A belle of the Southland—his fair lady-love;
As mark of her favor and meed of his duty
She leaned from the window and threw him her glove.
"Adieu!" sang the rider—away he went flying
To fields that ere long would be strewn with the dying;
"Adieu!" cried the maid—more sanguine than sighing—
As proud as a princess and pure as a dove.

The hoof-beats grew fainter — she lingered and
listened—
Her breathing more soft than the breath of a bird—
Till on her dark lashes the rising drops glistened,
And only her heart-beat was all that she heard.
"Thank Heaven!" she cried, "that Allen departed
"Before this weak flood from my eye-lids had started—
"He went as he should, like a knight lion-hearted,
"Unsoftened by tears and unchecked by a word."

The steed and his rider—in sympathy blended—
Had sped o'er the road as if racing for gain;
Their mood was now cooler, and Allen, low-bended,
Slacked rein while he fondled the long, flowing
mane.
"Well done!" said he gaily, "my fleet-footed Golder!
"Fair Evlyn shall know, before time is much older,
"That none in the fray can be swifter and bolder
"Than thou and myself, till we're sundered or slain."

What further he spoke had the accent of sadness,
But anger shone hot in the glance of his eye;
"My grey-headed sire declares it is madness
"To take up the sword, but the charge I deny.
"He loves the old flag; in the day of its splendor
"The South was its truest and bravest defender;
"Usurped by a foe that would ravage and rend her—
"She guards it no longer, but stands to defy."

"My State is a sovereign, in league with 'King Cotton'—
"Not a vassal to serve the 'Dominion of Corn';
"I hail our new flag—let the old be forgotten!
"My homage I give to a Power new-born.
"We've cast off the Union—our burden unloading;
"We've done with the fret of the yoke, and the goading;
"Away with regret, and with craven foreboding—
"Good-bye to old yesterday—welcome the morn!"

From camp in the distance a signal is sounded—
His answering yell made the wide forest ring;
A touch of the spur and forward he bounded
As quick as an arrow let loose from the string.
In the light of Ambition—a glamour deceiving—
The loom of his fancy a fabric was weaving
Whose warp is of glory—whose woof is of grieving—
Whose purple is deeper than covers a king.

O, treacherous war! No word was e'er spoken
More fair, when thine to the Southland was said;
But when her brave armies were riven and broken,
And women were sobbing with anguish and dread—
How changed was thy visage! How grievous and gory!
The pen that records and illumines thy story,
Is plucked, not alone from the pinion of glory,
But as oft from the vulture that feeds on the dead!

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At twilight all bleeding we lay side by side,
My gallant young foeman and I,
On the field where we fell when the battle's red tide
Like a wave of destruction rolled by.
All the hate I had felt in the heat of the strife
Had vanished and gone like a breath,
And I fain would have shared my own poor chance of life
To rescue the trooper from death.

"I'm dying," he whispered, "no comrade is near
"But chivalry ever is true—
"The secret I hold that none other can hear
"I trust it, my foeman, to you;
"See—here on my breast—a poor tattered glove—
" 'T was a maiden as fair as the day
"Who threw from her window this token of love
"The morning I galloped away.

"I've worn it with honor, as her lover should,
"Where danger fell thick as the rain;
"And though it is blotted to-day by my blood,
"It carries no uglier stain.
"I pray that if ever a chance should betide
"You'll kindly bring back to her hand
"This pledge of her faith and proof that I died
"All worthy—and she'll understand.

"She lives where the river sweeps round a wide bend
"In a mansion whose fashion is past;
"A window swells out from the far eastern end
"Where Evlyn"—that word was his last.—
The wound of that night has hindered me long
From keeping true faith with my foe;
Fair stranger, take note of the quest in my song—
Do you know the fair maid—do you know?

AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-SIX

A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE OF SHILOH.

The firing slacked a little while, that fateful Shiloh day,
Their line fell back within the woods and left us there at bay;
The smoke was slowly lifting, but the soil was red and wet
Where in the combat's deadly rage our lines had lately met.
Beyond our front, upon the ground which battle's breath had fanned,
Upraised and feebly beckoning, we saw a single hand.
"See! Sergeant!"—said a comrade near—"that signal of distress!"
With impulse born of sympathy and youthful eagerness
I sprang out through the opening, and swiftly reached the spot
Where lay one of the enemy, pierced by a fatal shot.
"Water!"—said he plaintively—and quick from my canteen
He cooled the thirsty agony which dying made so keen.
"God bless you, friend! there's danger here—make haste! be quick and go!

"They'll soon come back—my regiment—they'll charge again, I know!"
But yet his hand lay on my arm—once more his fevered lips
Drank eagerly a sweeter draft than e'er th' undying sips.
Then, smiling, tried—but tried in vain—to say the word "Good-bye"—
I heard my comrade's warning shout and left him there to die.

The patter of the skirmish line—the thick and maddening roar
Swept swiftly o'er the scene again, more deadly than before.
Scant time for human sympathy—scant time for pity then—
The frenzy of the fighting soon made demons out of men;
A kind of savage rapture through the soldier's bosom thrills
When carnage rules his spirit and he pities not, but kills.
Say not that men were braver in some far-off, by-gone age—
My eyes saw deeds of valor there would shine on Homer's page.

Ah! I had many a comrade then whose over-flaming ire
Relighted my own waning torch with his contagious fire;
For oft I felt my courage sink but bolstered it with pride,
And in those swelling moments I could manfully have died.
In battle's bloody ordeal—that fierce and cruel game—
Does not the fear that faces it deserve a fairer name?

You all know well the history of that disputed field;
Before a fiery avalanche our left was forced to yield,
And miles of dead at night lay in the sombre, southern wood,
Where miles of wavering battle-lines that day had swayed and stood.
And Oh! that night of agony!—the wretchedness and pain
Which made the wounded envious of those who had been slain!
While through the age-long interval of deep and dread suspense
A load of more than mountain's weight bore on the aching sense,

As if a fiend were torturing each bare and quivering
nerve—
'T would shake the sullen savage, aye, 't would make a
stoic swerve!
Will time e'er bring the fruitage of that hope now in
the bud,
When men will cease from laureling the fame that feeds
on blood?

At dawn a burst of fury came like that of yesterday.
But Buell's men stood with us now, in bold and stern
array;
Like flames in stubble newly spread afresh our spirits
burned,
And ere the sun had quit the East their columns back-
ward turned;
Then loud and long our cheers rang out—more tame
their answering yell—
Their fierce but fitful firing yet more faint and fainter
fell,
Until the distant booming of the far retreating gun
Proclaimed we were the victors!—the gory field was
won. —

The story of that battle-field seems never to grow old;
Nay, it was only yesterday again I heard it told.
'T was in a group of veterans—a gray and grizzly group,
Whose steps had lost their measured spring, whose shoulders had a stoop—
And when the rousing climax came that overflowed each breast,
I felt the rush of memories and shouted with the rest.
But I did no deed of valor there to honor or to boast;
He only does his duty well who only holds his post,
And chaplets are not fashioned for the common soldier's brow.
But there's one thought that warms my heart and swells my bosom *now*,
When I recall the vision of that famous battle-scene:
'T is just that gift of water from my battered old canteen.

LIFE'S FLEETING SHOW.

AN IDYL.

Deep in a wood, where boughs o'erhung its rounded shore,
A smiling lake was hid. Drawn by some viewless thread
Of chance, one summer morn, my footsteps thither came.
The sun had climbed half-way to noon—and roving bees
Robbed wantonly the waiting flowers, while bird-notes filled
The echoing woods with sound. As pensively I leaned
Against a friendly oak, a nimble-footed fawn—
Still faintly marked with many a finger-touch of white
Upon its silky coat of tan—stole shyly from
The leafy shade and stood upon the lake's moist rim;
There, as it dipped its dainty head, I saw its nether
Twin in counter movement rise, till lip met lip
Just on the water's face, and circling ripples broke
The shadowy counterfeit. Thence—bending slow on me
Its curious gaze—with alternating start and pause
The timorous thing drew near and touched my offered hand.

That moment a soaring vulture's shadow chanced to fall
Athwart my breast, and, on the instant,—seized with fright—
The fawn fled wild-eyed from my sight, nor once looked back.—
It seemed but childish fancy, yet I felt a pang,
As of a broken trust, or severed sympathy.
On many morrows yearningly I came unto
That spot, but nevermore found fawn or foot-print there.—
'Twas late I learned how true my life was symbol'd there.

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LADDIE.

(Written for a Ballad Singer, Mrs. J. M. P.)

O my laddie! my dearie!
Ye dinna ken how weary
The day is gaun wi'out ye,
For I'm thinkin' aye about ye;
I pine to hear ye whistle
Like larks aboon the thistle—
I'm nigh to greet while here my lane,
I bide, I bide for ye, my ain!

Oh! how brawlie and cantie—
Wi' arm baith strang and tentie—
Ye bore me o'er the heather
Just as light as ony feather;
Your plaidie was around me
But anither fetter bound me—
For, Oh! how gladsome I had seen
That leuk—that leuk frae out your een.

O, my laddie! my laddie!
I lo'e your very plaidie—
I lo'e your very bonnet

Wi' the silver bickle on it;
I lo'e your collie, Harry,
I lo'e the kent ye carry—
But Oh! I hae nae pow'r to tell
How much—how much I lo'e yersel'!

LOVE'S TRAGEDY.

You ask me why I am still unwed;
I do not know,
Unless, in truth, it must be said
That by some unseen guidance led,
Since Love was strangely numb or dead,
'T was fated so.

For I have never scorned the power
By all confessed
Of womankind—the human flower
Whose petals oped in Eden's bower
And ever since that natal hour
The world has blessed.

There *was* a maid of seeming trust
And Eve-like form—
Of spirit rare and swelling bust—
And I was a lad of motive just;
So passion rose as passion must
When youth is warm.

I did what youth has always done
Since Adam fell;
I swore she was the only one
Beneath the circle of the sun
Whose worth defied comparison
And words to tell.

With burning cheek, and burning speech,
And heart aflame—
All hot as lava from the breach
Which earthquakes rend, I did beseech
One tender word, and thought to reach
My fervid aim.

Her soul was stainless as the wave
That washes sin:
Or as some streamlet fit to lave
Diana's hand—her honor brave
As this fair, honest speech she gave
Her answer in:

"I know not the deceiver's art,
"Nor will I try
"To play so false and base a part;

"If I should say, with feigned start,
"Your answer does not touch my heart—
"My lips would lie.

"Within my breast there is no dearth
"Of fond desire—
"Which even now is waked to birth:
"But it is held in firmer girth
"Than that by which th' incrusted earth
"Holds hidden fire.

"A shadow dark, immovable,
"Is fixed within
"My bosom's inmost, secret cell:
"You cannot know, nor may I tell
"Aught, save that you shall know this well—
"It is not sin.

"At least 'twas never sin of mine;
"But yet a trace
"As fateful as the curse Divine,
"Is—like an evil, pois'nous vine—
"Forever running through the line
"Of my doomed race.

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"'Twere crime if I should ever link
"Another's life
"To mine—my soul would shrink
"As from the pit's eternal brink!
"Of Love's sweet cup I ne'er can drink,
"Nor be a wife."

Adown the pathway through the wood
She hasted on,
A thing Divine in maidenhood!
From that loved spot where she had stood—
A desert now—a solitude—
Forever gone!

I call her name amid those trees—
She is not there—
Vain echo rides the answ'ring breeze:
But, mystery of mysteries—
She evermore pursues and flees
Me everywhere.

THE MAGDALEN'S THANKSGIVING DAY.

Thanksgiving Day had come and gone with all its festal cheer,
And Love had knitted up again the ravel of a year;
The night fell soft o'er happy homes—to me it brought unrest—
The ghost of a long-buried grief was my untimely guest.
An air of comfort filled my room—it glowed with warmth and light,
But, turning from its open door I went forth in the night.
My wandering steps ere long had reached an old deserted pier,
And, as I stood in silence wrapped, a woman hurried near.
Why came she there? My heart divined the truth she dared not give—
She sought to end a shameless life she could no longer live.
I felt a touch of pity for the outcast thus forlorn—
Bereft of Christian sympathy and damned by Christian scorn;

Quick on my sight a vision flashed—a home-scene far
away,
Where anguished hearts had grieved afresh for one not
named that day:
Ah! mine seemed but a shallow grief—these hearts
more deeply bled
For a loved one lost though living yet, while mine was
only dead.
If Christ—the Pure, the Perfect One—could brook the
sinner's touch,
Should I—one of the self-condemned—be loth to do as
much?
Impelled by Christian chivalry tow'rd one so shunned
and banned,
I spurned the folly of preaching then, but offered a
friendly hand.
O God! how she that token seized—with glad, exultant
grip,
Like one who holds the life-line fast on board a sinking
ship;
A sudden burst of moonlight came and swept the
shadow past—
I saw a face beatified with hope-light on it cast;
Then under frailty's ashes quick the spark repentant
shone—

The Magdalen was sobbing and her tears fell with my own.

What need to tell again the tale the world has learned so well?
How innocence—though warned so oft—by too much trusting fell;
A lover's vows—a secret flight—man's perfidy—and then
The cloud of shame—the reckless plunge—the scoff and sport of men!—
I listened, though the outward ear played but a minor part,
Her piteous wail for rescue pierced like a needle through my heart.
"Oh! is there not on this broad earth one fair and friendly spot,
"Where sheltered by sweet purity, the past may be forgot?
"'Twere worth the world and all its thrones to wear one hour, now,
"The jewel of honored womanhood—ah! show me where and how!"

The House of Rescue swung its door on willing hinges wide,

And she who fled a scorning world found welcome
warm inside.
At midnight in my silent room—childless, alone, and
gray—
(For chance had robbed my mateless heart in life's
romantic day)
I sat in soothing reverie, and ceased to question why
The stricken one should still live on, or why the blest
should die;
My murmuring changed to music now, like strains of
long ago—
My grief had ebbed and vanished in another's flood
of woe.
The flame within my lamp was dead—dead embers
filled the grate,
But I had led a fallen one from Ruin to Rescue's gate,
And that sweet thought so filled my breast I felt nor
chill nor gloom—
It seemed that Christ in spirit came to bless my
lonely room.

FORGIVENESS.

But yesterday I did a grievous wrong
Unto a friend who loves me well;
Last night I sought and pondered, late and long,
How I my penitence should tell.

This morn the way was plain, for then I held
The rein of Duty over Pride;
At noon, again, my stubborn heart rebelled,
And scorned to be so crucified.

This eve we met in twilight's tender glow:
His loving face—bent tow'rd the west—
The heav'ly radiance reflected so
All shadow fled and I confessed.

How sweet his pardon was! His eyes, suffused,
Looked all the while upon the ground
As if *he* were the culprit—I th' abused—
Ah! mine was much the deeper wound.

Nor did he leave me with an aching sense
Of guiltiness—his love sufficed
To comfort me, and show my recompense
Complete; 't was like the love of Christ.

THE MOTE AND THE BEAM.

A Fragment.

Ah, me! how swiftly we condemn
Our fellows all—the best of them—
In bigotry with flippant phrase,
Abusing oft their better ways;
As scripture hath it—prone to note
The presence of our brother's mote,
Ignoring that so snugly hid
Beneath our own unwinking lid.
His fancy sees some doubtful good,
And, wavering 'twixt should not and should
Till weakened will no more deters,
His faltering judgment yields and errs.
But we—more righteous, you and I—
In virtuous anger may decry
His act for which we have no mind,
Being to its allurement blind,
And yet accept without a qualm,
With forward step and outstretched palm,
Some sweetened vice which he'd resist
With firm-set foot and lifted fist.—
Now there's my neighbor o'er the way:

In confidence I'm free to say
That for a bigot, narrow, mean,
His like was scarcely ever seen.
His faith and he are joined as well
As periwinkle to his shell;
To see him wriggle in and out
And note the rare and wondrous fit,
The world could never have a doubt
'T was made for him and he for it.—
His twin for meanness lives next door,
A miser rich and wanting more;
I oft had clearly marked the curse
Imprinted on his face of greed,
And knew his long and lengthy purse
Would never ope to others' need.—
A scholar fond of books and ease
Secluded lives beyond those trees,
From men apart. 'T is often said
He robs his heart to enrich his head,
And though reputed very wise,
He lacks all human sympathies.—
That cottage yonder where the vine
Has clambered to the very eaves
And hid the architect's design

Behind its fresh and looming leaves,
Is where a blatant preacher dwells
And cons all week the things he tells
On Sunday to the flock, who toil
To fill his cruse with unearned oil.—
I'd shame to tell you all I could
Of each house in this neighborhood.
But there is one that heretofore
We 've all agreed is its eyesore:
You see below there on my side
Where the gate swings latchless loose and wide
And the boards are broke from the reeling fence,
Which fails to hide the brambles dense
In the choking yard? You note how brown
The house—as if it wore a frown;
It seems to shrink from ground to roof,
As if from its neighbors it held aloof.
Sometimes you may see at the door a face
Well framed in the woe of the desolate place:
'Tis the once proud wife whose pride is crushed
By that for which she has often blushed
Till her cheek was bleached with the bitter tears
That washed it white in the hopeless years.
That is the deepest, darkest blot

For there lives an outcast, hopeless sot.

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His bosom heaved 'neath his rusty coat
And he swallowed hard in his swelling throat;
Tho' he grieved not in words as others grieve,
A tear-drop fell on his tattered sleeve.

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THE FINAL GOSPEL.

What matter if we search for God
In ways no other foot hath trod?
What though we deem He hears our call,
Or doubt if he hath heard at all?
It is the striving of the soul
That is, itself, the very goal;
Who yearns for Him, unceasingly,
Shall find—hath found—for that is He.
Whoever tries to thread the maze
Of churchly doctrines, or essays
To prove one absolutely true
To men of every clime and hue—
Resolved to cast all others out—
Must learn to honor honest doubt;
For, though we sit in neighboring pews,
We hold diverse and warring views—
Scarce two agreeing, dot for dot,
What is God's meaning, or is not.
One sees a God whose vengeance dire
Foredooms the babe to endless fire;
One sees a gracious, pard'ning smile

For all mankind, despite its guile;
One holds the hampered human will
Accountable for every ill;
And *One* e'en doubts if Chance or God
Created him a soul, or clod.—
But best of all is he whose deeds
Are just and right by all the creeds—
Whom Christian, Moslem, Pagan, all
Approve, whate'er his name they call;
Who grants that creeds, howe'er received,
Are but beliefs, howe'er believed;
Who hath no quarrel with his friend
About his faith or final end,
Nor seeks to pry conviction loose
Upon the fulcrum of abuse;
Who neither boasts himself a saint,
Nor damns the world with loud complaint;
Who meets contention, when he must,
With valiant front and manly thrust,
But trains his hand and heart and mind
In love's sweet art of being kind;
Whose footsteps part not from his speech;
Who lives what others only preach—
Content to leave the rest to Him

Who purposely hath made it dim.
He frets not that he cannot show
Those things which none can surely know;
But strives to do as best he can,
His duty to his fellow-man—
And waits not for some future sphere,
But tries to make a Heaven here.

MY SONG THAT IS NEVER SUNG.

There comes to my spirit's ear, sometimes,
A deep, unworded lay,
Whose cadenced flow of unwrit rhymes
Keeps ringing the live-long day.
I awake at morn—it rises then,
But eludes my faltering tongue;
It swells and dies unheard by men—
My song that is never sung.

I wend my way through the crowded street—
I trudge through lonely lanes—
I stand where genial spirits meet,
Or where dumb sorrow reigns;
It ripples along like a brook at play—
It grieves like the ocean's moan—
My lips are mute, but I hear alway
A tale in the undertone.

While musing thus I meet my friend
And pass unseeing by,
Then rouse me later and, shaming, send
A regret for my careless eye;

But he hath a heart that exults in strife—
In marts or arms he is king;
He pities the soul in the warfare of life
That halts to listen or sing.

Ah! surely, each thought that our bosoms bear
Sometime we shall unfold;
There's an ear that waits in the great Somewhere
To hear my story told.
Will the pent-up strains that seem accurst
By lifelong silence here,
From lips unlocked by angels burst
On Heaven's atmosphere?

IN LIGHTER VEIN.

THE BARN.

(To My Young Nephew, R. V. W.,
2400 Ridge Road, Berkeley.)

It is n't so bad to reside in a stable,
When you think of the Centaurs of ancient Greek fable,
Who held high their heads, on those far classic shores,
Although they wore hoofs, and roamed round on "all-fours."
Should you fear that distinction would shun such a home,
Remember, a horse was once Consul at Rome;
Nor can you forget—what truth could be stranger?—
The Light of the World first shone from a manger.

Of course you'll be careful in guarding your manners,
And see that your harness don't smell of the tanners;
If at table you find in your oatmeal some chaff,
And it tickles—be gentle—avoid a horse-laugh.
There's danger in straps for yearlings that flare up
And forget that good rearing don't mean simply "rear up."

Your father won't kick, if, in French, you say "Père,"
But you'd better use English in addressing your—
mother.

On the race-course (that's school) just get up and strive
To "get there"—or (a word that sounds better)—arrive:
If you're classed with slow-trotters, of two-forty gait,
And find you can beat 'em—just go! and don't wait.
Columbus showed how he could stand up an egg
On its one little end, with no foot and no leg.
Who knows but *you'll* learn to combine, by some
plan,
The strength of a horse with the mind of a man?

UPON RECEIVING A BIRTHDAY BAG FROM A CHARITY.

When this all-conquering scourge of sneeze
Has bowed one's head and bent his knees
Until he knows he must have shrunk
In longitude as well as spunk—
'T would be unfair at such a time
To save, perhaps, a paltry dime
By taking measure of himself
And gauging thus his gift of pelf.
One might—in such a state of sag—
Feel mean enough to keep the bag.
In normal days my honest height
Was five feet seven—stretched up tight;
The pleasure promised by your card
(From which I fear myself debarred)
Should put one on tip-toe, I know;
And—willing to be measured so—
I stretch myself and do not count,
But send a coin for due amount.

Monrovia, Calif.,
Jan. 2, 1901.

RANDOM LINES.

While Talent through the gateway crawls,
Swift Genius soars above the walls—
So man with limping Logic halts
While woman's mind, more nimble, vaults
To ripe conclusions just and fair
And ends contention with "So, there!"

The fire of passion fiercely glows
Just while the faithful bellows blows,
But turns to ashes cold and grey
Before the ending of the day—
Or, if neglected, e'en more soon:
'T is dead before the heat of noon.

The virtues of a friend he saw
So large they well-nigh broke the law;
His vices, though of every kind,
He would not see—there he was blind.

Those well-worn words so wondrous dear
When spoken to the waiting ear,—
Though by a seraph sung or read,
Are sweeter by the loved one said.

What surgeon with his searching knife
Has found the principle of life?
What surpliced surgeon of the soul
Can probe the source of life's control
And find where impulse takes its rise
And why 't is good or otherwise?

But let the spark of Genius flash—
And whipt o'er wire by lightning's lash
It thrills the world on every side,
Tho' seas and continents divide;
A mile 's an inch, an hour 's an age,
At eve we scorn the morning page.

Oh what a laggard foot hath Time
When Youth awaits him! In our prime
He soon outruns our fleeting powers,
With whip in hand to urge the hours;
When we are old he flies so fast
That ere we reckon he has passed—
His streaming robe we fain would clutch,
But hobble on with cane and crutch.

When we are dead, what care we then
For all the sighs and songs of men?
The part we save for future days
Is lost to present and always.
Give me this year, this day, this hour—
The fruit may fail, I'll take the flower.
Bitter fortune teaches me
I may outrun slow destiny
And slip beyond the closing gates,
While he 's shut out who halts and waits.

And when I lie upon my bier,
If Poverty will drop a tear
In silent homage to my worth,
I ask no better fame of earth.

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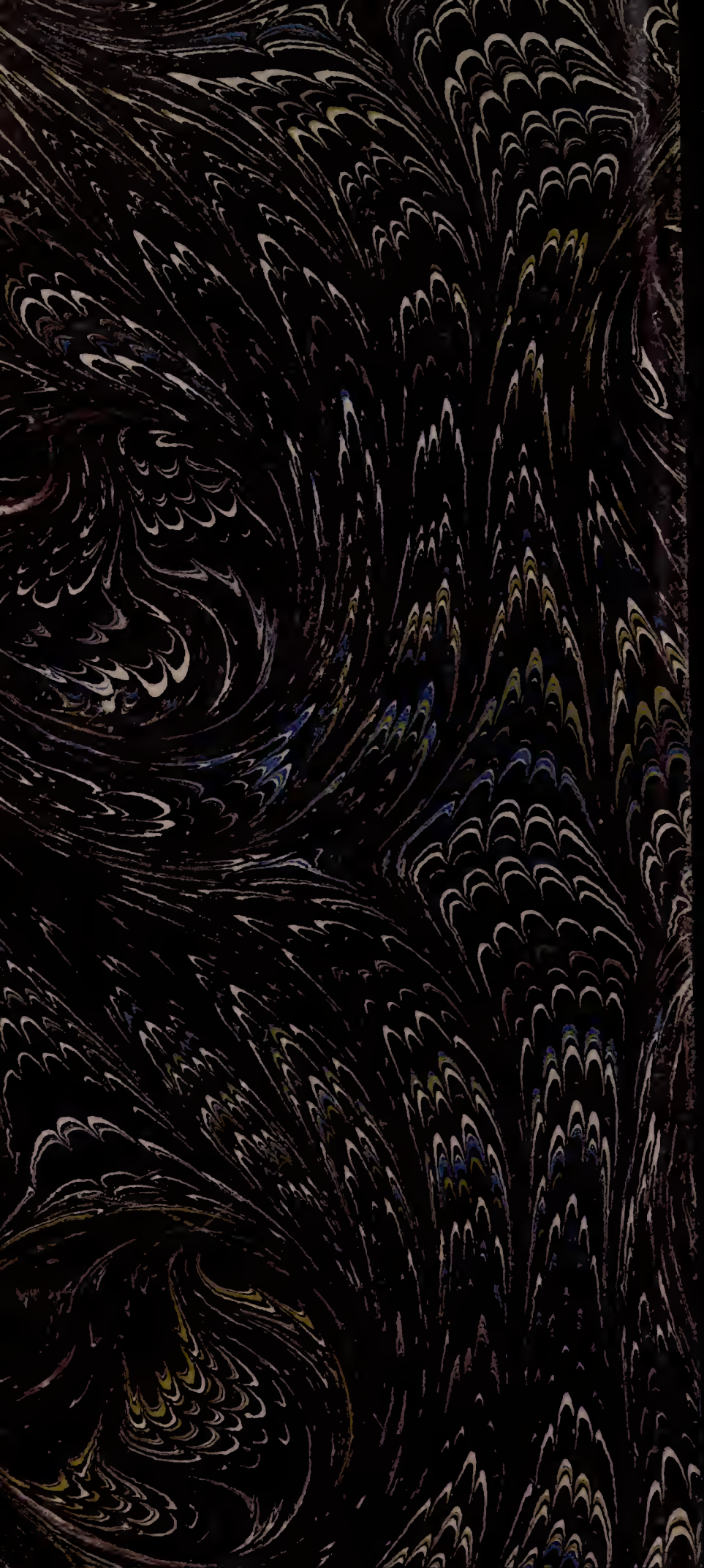
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